

MUSIC PROMOTION GUIDE

For struggling artists

Written by
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In this e-book you will find out:

- About psychology of a successful artist;
- How music business works without your art losing it's value;
- Most common mistakes artists tend to do;
- How social networks can help you;
- How your website should look like, so a visitor doesn't leave it in five seconds.

Mindset

So many artists are wasting their time and talent writing, producing, making great music and not putting any effort to make it to be heard. They are doing it because they hope to be discovered by an accident. But there is a very little chance for that to happen, because there are many less talented artists who worked a little on promoting their music, and made it to be heard by thousands of people even if their music is total crap. Why you should hide behind those who have no talent?

This doesn't mean you have to become a music business man, or you should start a label, or anything like that. You have to put just a little effort, to make your music accessible, easy to find and easy to share. When you set everything up, it'll work even when you sleep. All you need to do then, is to adjust it to your needs from time to time, and let it do the work for you!

Little by little the awareness about your music will grow, and you'll end up your records being sold, either by yourself or by a label that has signed you. Although, i encourage to sell records by yourself. Why should you do the label's work? Because the label will take more than a half of an income from your album sales. Not enough for you? Because they don't care about your music and your promotion as much as you do. I'm not saying that labels are evil. My point is, that nowadays, it is YOU who's responsible for YOUR success.

How music business works without your art losing it's value

Many artists think this way: make music which meets today's trendy styles = profit. Make true art = no income at all. This is a very bad attitude. If you're a wide-minded artist, then you shouldn't be such a narrow-minded person. You know there are people who appreciate your art. Even if it's a small number of people. There may be some more, but you have to give a chance for them to hear your music. This is the point of music promotion.

Trendy music is for masses, for people who have no taste. Is your music like that? I don't think so. So why do you think you should make music for people without taste? Do you think that people who have a taste, don't buy music? I think the reality is quite the opposite. Mainstream music is downloaded illegally way more often than true music. And real music lovers love having CD's from their favorite artists. Moreover, everyone likes to share good music, which is equal for you to be promoted as an artist for free.

My point is, forget about mainstream music audience. This is not your market. Focus on audience that cares about your kind of music. If you can find your niche, it is great!

Most common mistakes artists tend to do

War against free downloads

One of the most common mistakes is to avoid your tracks to be downloaded for free at all costs. Some artists and labels are doing everything they can to remove their tracks from youtube, torrent networks, podcasts and everywhere else. Because they tend to think that, if people can't get it for free they will buy it. But it is stupid, because they are not going to start buying your music if you keep it like a secret. They will download it illegally anyway and will listen to it, and still won't buy it. It just doesn't work this way. It is equal to limiting the spreading of your music, and not allowing other people to promote you, without you even asking them to do that. They are doing all the promotional work for you, and doing it for free. Some artists and labels are paying big money for that! And they are also wasting their resources for keeping their music from youtube and other internet places. What a waste of money, energy and time. Give your music away for free. Not necessarily all the music that you have. But you must let it travel freely. If you got some really good music, it will travel.

Telling that your music style is unique

This may be true. Maybe your music is really unique. But imagine this – you ask me: „what kind of music do you produce?“. And my answer is this: „well, it's totally unique, you can't describe it“. And now, tell me, are you interested to hear it? I wouldn't be interested to listen to an artist who cannot describe his music. When you are describing your music, you have to give a spark for my imagination to make me interested. Imagine it if i answered: „well, it's heavy and experimental drum n bass“. I bet you wanna hear this if you're a drum n bass fan! And what if i said: „it's like computers and robots became self aware“. How do you like this kind of description? To me it would sound intriguing. Although sometimes describing your music is a really difficult task to do. But if you can get it done, then your music will travel more easily.

Avoiding to be compared to other artists

Every artist strives to be the one and only. And every artist is actually unique in one or other way. But it is similar to describing your music. People need something to compare you to. Otherwise, it's difficult for them to understand what you are doing. If you told me something like: „my music is something like if Aphex Twin would collaborate with Technical Itch“, i would start to imagine something, and this might make me interested to hear, how this kind of mix would sound like. Anyway, it is impossible not to be compared to other artists. People do that, and will do for ever. Just tell: „it sounds a little bit like Chris Liebing“ for example. But again, sometimes it is difficult to get a good comparison, but you have to try. It's not that important to who are you comparing yourself. It's more about making your potential listener's imagination go.

Social Networking

Social networks are almost the most important tools for artists to promote their music today. In social networks, you have to communicate with people, not only to push your music. You have to tell them, what were you doing, what are you doing and what are you going to do. And then, you have to answer their comments. Then you can say: „hey check this out, it's my latest album“. People want to have a real conversation with you, which is a two way street. Who likes a person who's only talking and never listening to you?

Of course, you must have a facebook page, and update it frequently. Twitter would also help. Just use your personal twitter account as your artist account. I don't think you're tweeting anything that is too personal to share with people anyway. If you are, then forget twitter. I don't recommend having multiple twitter accounts, because it's difficult to keep them updated effectively. Although, if you think you can do it, then go ahead.

There is a website for artists, where you can update all of your social networks at once. It is „Artist Data“. You update your profile there, and your facebook, myspace, twitter gets updated automatically. Check it out: <http://www.artistdata.com>

Another very important social network is YouTube. Because video is a very powerful thing. Many people like to listen to music through youtube. Moreover, you can enhance your fans experience with video. You can put there videos of your live shows, interviews, music videos. Or you can just upload your music with album artworks instead of an actual video material. Also you can record some of your studio sessions, rehearsals, make a video blog etc. People tend to share the music they like from youtube on social networks. It's spreading and spreading. You don't have to control it, it's a natural process.

I believe that a replacement for myspace, which used to be such a great network for musicians for many years, is now SoundCloud. Get your music there, share it on social networks, on your website and everywhere else. Let it fly!

Also, keep an eye on the new social networks like Google plus. Promotional opportunities are still undiscovered there.

Your website

Even though, there are plenty of social networks and other websites for artists, i still recommend having your own website. Find the cheapest website hosting service you can. For example, i'm using a hosting service which costs me less then a dollar every month per website. Also you need a a good domain name. It should look something like this: www.yourband.com. Domain names cost up to \$20 a year.

Your website should have a simple, clear and clean design. Because it takes less than one minute for a person to decide if he or she likes the website. And if not, if it's confusing to them, or it just looks ugly, they'll probably leave.

Here are few design suggestions for you:

- Simple, standart navigation.
- Use the same font everywhere.
- Avoid using too many colors. Use only two or three.

Also your website should have the following information:

- Short biography.
- Some streamable or downloadable music.
- Photos
- Videos.
- Contact info.
- Info about your live shows.
- Links to your social network profiles.
- RSS feed.
- Sign-up to receive a newsletter form.

Some more suggestions, to make people not to leave after five seconds:

- DON'T USE FLASH!!! (google can't read it, you don't want to be unfindable)
- DON'T WRITE TEXT WITH YOUR CAPS LOCK ON (it's very annoying)
- No music auto plays when someone visits your website. **It's super annoying!** What if i was trying to keep it quiet, because my baby's sleeping? What if i'm trying to hide from my boss that i'm surfing the web at work? And at last, what if i was listening to some music already!?

Finishing Touch

That's it. Not much, is it? As you can see, it's not really about marketing knowledge, it's more about your attitude and mindset. It's about the way you think. You have to decide that you want to be successful, and then you can start becoming a successful artist.

Good luck!

Hopefully this little e-book will light up your enthusiasm, to make it!

About the author

An author of this little e-book is Evaldas Azbukauskas. An electronic music artist known under aliases of SoulSonic, Giriu Dvasios and 101. He has also started his own label in March of 2010. The label is called Cold Tear Records and is now the most productive label in Lithuania, and a well established name in an international electronic music scene. As an artist, Evaldas is a well known electronic music producer in Lithuania and successfully spreading his sound in an international scene.

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